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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## SIGTARP INVESTIGATIONS TEAM RECOGNIZED FOR EXCELLENCE

### *Team Receives 2013 CIGIE Award for Excellence in Investigations*

WASHINGTON, DC - The Office of the Special Inspector General for the Troubled Asset Relief Program (SIGTARP) today announced that its Investigations team, in conjunction with federal partners, has been awarded the 2013 Award for Excellence in Investigations by the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency (CIGIE).

The award was presented to SIGTARP agents for uncovering and jointly investigating a bank fraud conspiracy involving two former senior officers at American Mortgage Specialists (AMS), an Arizona-based mortgage loan originator. Scott N. Powers, former AMS chief executive officer, and David E. McMaster, former AMS vice president of lending operations, conspired to defraud TARP-recipient BNC National Bank (BNC) out of approximately \$28 million. As a result of the loss, BNC, which had received \$20 million in TARP funds, was unable to make its required dividend payments to the Treasury Department for three years. As a result of their fraud, Powers and McMaster were sentenced to a combined total of more than 23 years in federal prison. Powers and McMaster also each received restitution and forfeiture orders in the amount of \$28.6 million. Additionally, Lauretta Horton, former AMS director of accounting, and David Kaufman, an outside auditor, were convicted for their roles in the fraud. For more information about the case, see the case description on the Investigations page of the SIGTARP website, located here: <http://www.sigtar.gov/pages/investigations.aspx>.

"This is the third straight year SIGTARP investigators have been recognized for their superior work in rooting out fraud to protect taxpayers' TARP investments," said Christy Romero, Special Inspector General for TARP (SIGTARP). "This recognition highlights SIGTARP's commitment to exposing fraud related to TARP undertaken at the expense of the American public. SIGTARP and our law enforcement partners will continue to bring justice to those who seek to exploit and defraud TARP."

SIGTARP employees recognized for their individual contributions during the investigation include:

- James Harbin, Special Agent
- Charles Mullaly, Special Agent

The following federal entities worked jointly with SIGTARP to uncover and investigate the fraud scheme:

- Federal Housing Finance Agency, Office of Inspector General
- U.S. Department of Justice

## About SIGTARP

The Office of the Special Inspector General for the Troubled Asset Relief Program investigates fraud, waste, and abuse in connection with TARP.

To report suspected illicit activity involving TARP, dial the **SIGTARP Hotline**: 1-877-SIG-2009 (1-877-744-2009).

To receive alerts about quarterly reports, new audits, and media releases issued by SIGTARP, sign up at [www.SIGTARP.gov/pages/press.aspx](http://www.SIGTARP.gov/pages/press.aspx). Follow SIGTARP on Twitter @SIGTARP.

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